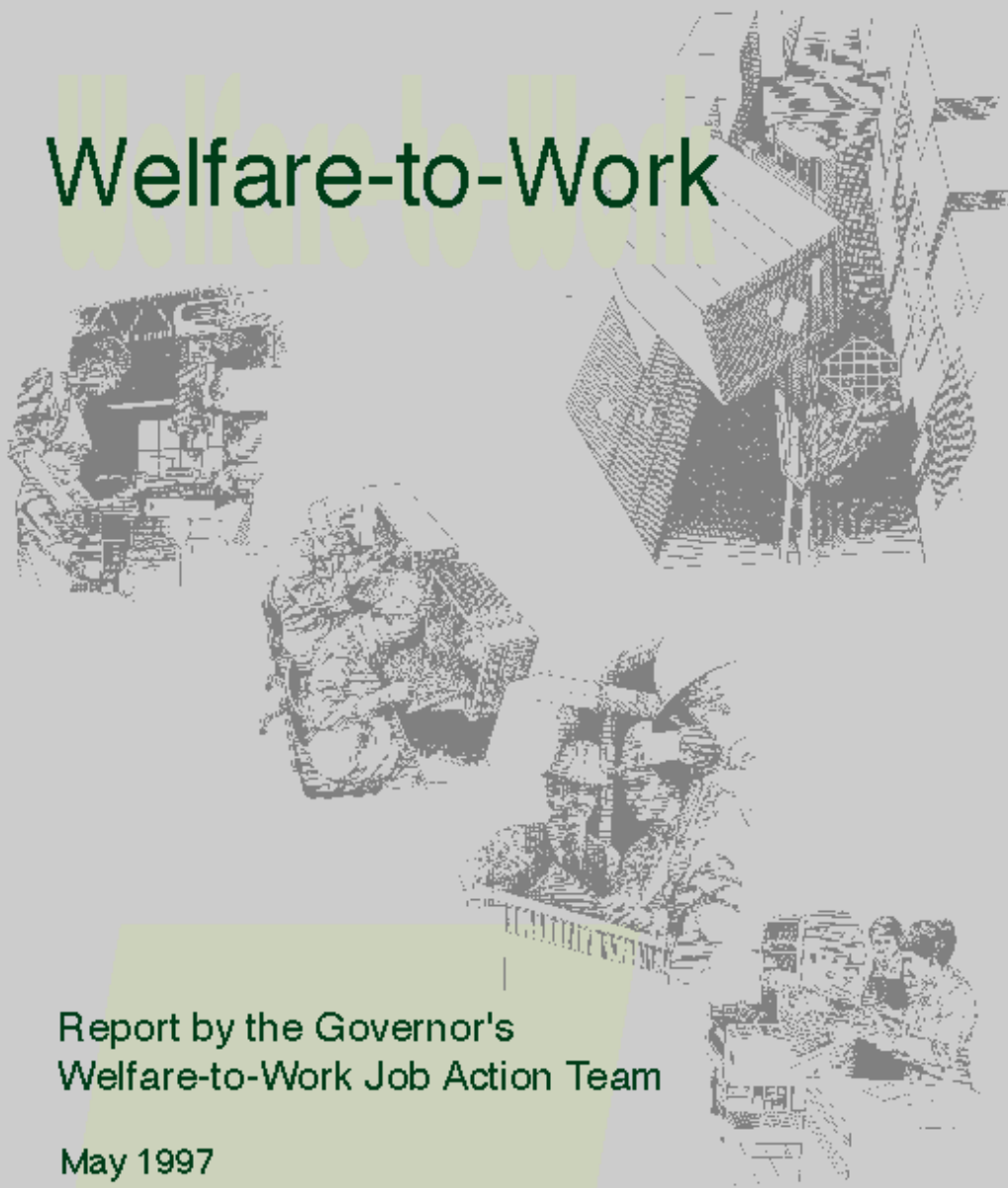


Welfare-to-Work



Report by the Governor's
Welfare-to-Work Job Action Team

May 1997



Prepared with the assistance of the

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Welfare-to-Work Job Action Team

May 7, 1997

The Honorable Pete Wilson
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Wilson:

We are pleased to forward to you the final recommendations of the Welfare-to-Work Job Action Team. We believe the recommendations contained in this report will help you in developing administrative and legislative actions which will effectively and efficiently move Californians from welfare to work. We thank you for the opportunity to be part of this unique effort to create a public-private partnership to address this critical issue.

The team consisted of high-level business leaders from a broad cross-section of California businesses, as well as California educators, service providers and ex-officio members from executive branch agencies and the Department of Education. The team met over a thirty-three day period to develop the recommendations contained in this report. We believe the members rose to the challenge of your request to produce thoughtful recommendations in a very short time period.

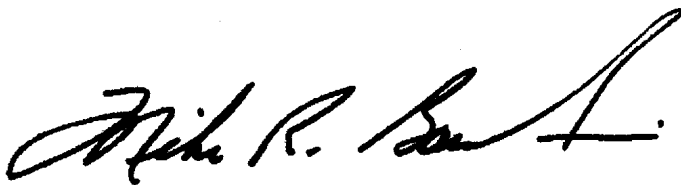
The team looked at the following three major areas:

- Job-matching, or those activities that will most effectively link welfare recipients to jobs.
- Identify ways in which workforce preparation can be improved to meet employer's needs to produce workers who not only are ready to work but are capable of staying on the job.
- California's overall attractiveness for economic growth and job-creating new investment and how to create more employment opportunities for welfare recipients.

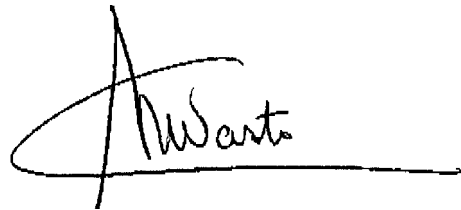
The recommendations cover each of these three themes and offers suggestions for change to assist in the challenge facing California of moving large numbers of individuals from welfare to work. We look forward to the continued employer involvement in activities identified in the report.

We thank you for the opportunity to serve the people of California.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike R. Bowlin".

Mike Bowlin
Chairman, CEO and President
ARCO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maryles Casto".

Maryles Casto
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Quigley".

Phil Quigley
Chairman, President and CEO
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INTRODUCTION

An estimated 600,000 Californians will come off of public assistance over the next three years. Under federal welfare reform, California needs to ensure there are employment opportunities for these welfare recipients, or risk losing millions of dollars in federal funds. To address this coming influx, the Governor solicited private and public sector recommendations on preparing and placing people in the workforce. On April 4, 1997 the Governor convened the Job Action Team to tap into the wealth of hands-on experience available only in the private sector, from a broad spectrum of California businesses. He tasked this team with developing specific proposals to answer the challenges presented by welfare reform.

After extensive debate, drawing input from across the state and across industries, the Job Action Team established policy recommendations in three major issue areas, covering:

- Increasing job matching activities to be more efficient, reach larger audiences and utilize state-of-the-art technology;
- Improvement of local workforce preparation; and
- Enhancing California's overall attractiveness for economic growth and new job-creating investment, to increase the job-pie.

In developing their recommendations, the Job Action Team considered a strategy's feasibility, potential impact, likelihood for support and other successful efforts already achieved. The Job Action Team also developed a list of issues and activities that require further consideration or that might be better addressed by long-term action or were out of the scope of this effort.

The recommendations are presented under the above three major issue areas. The members of the Job Action Team present the recommendations with the belief that the results will lead to employment opportunities for welfare recipients and contribute to the Governor's welfare-to-work efforts.

JOB MATCHING

Many employers recognize the importance of making welfare reform work. These employers, large and small, will do their share to make job opportunities available to people currently on welfare, given a good business climate and adequate workforce preparation. However, many employers, particularly smaller employers, do not know how to identify potential job candidates from the plethora of public and charitable programs providing some form of “job matching” services to welfare recipients.

These include various publicly financed and operated programs, those operated by non-governmental charitable organizations, and private temporary employment agencies. What we have found is that there is not necessarily a lack of resources for this need, but rather a lack of coordination -- and often, competition -- to make them effective.

There is no central public or private agency or point of contact at the state or local level responsible for job matching, nor even a source of reasonably comprehensive information about what agencies or groups which provide job-matching services or funding.

Unfortunately, separate statutory requirements, and the fact that funding for programs comes from a number of different sources, lead to balkanized programs. Employment and training services are spread out among myriad agencies and programs that are poorly coordinated. This results in poor service to the job candidate, and wastes valuable resources. For example, the Employment Development Department (EDD) lists only 3% of all job vacancies statewide, even though it is the largest source of job vacancy listings in the state.

Private and charitable job match programs are even more diverse and divided. They frequently compete for funds, jobs, applicants and recognition. As evidence of the difficulty this creates for a California company, when a large Southern California employer recently sought to fill several hundred entry level jobs, it was besieged with calls from over 100 job matching and training programs.

This segment of moving people from welfare to work is deeply fragmented and replete with duplicative efforts. The skills and employment barriers of individuals who are targets in welfare-to-work are for the most part neither measured nor systematically kept; what data is collected is not widely shared. Information on the potentially employable welfare recipient -- including approximately 40% with relevant work experience -- is grossly inadequate. In addition, what data is collected is not widely shared. Information on jobs is likewise sparse.

Fortunately, there are notable job matching strategies that have begun to emerge from exemplary individual programs. For example, the Riverside County Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program has received national recognition for its success in training and placing welfare recipients. The primary resource used for job match is the participants themselves who actively develop their own job leads through job search clubs. The cardinal characteristics of successful programs, gleaned from Riverside County GAIN and “best practices” studies of other such efforts, appear to be a strong focus on immediate employment, linkage to private sector employers, creation of an environment of high expectations, efficient management tools, and aggressive marketing of job applicants and

matching services. Riverside County GAIN employs a “work-first” concept and a philosophy that the best way to succeed in the labor market is to join it. The objective is to develop work habits and skills on the job rather than in a classroom. The expected program outcome for participants is employment. All internal measurements support this expectation.

The recommendations which follow speak to the need for program consolidation and collaboration by all parties involved in job matching. Success would be measured by reduced complexity and non-duplication of efforts. Outcome-oriented incentives are suggested as well as aggressive direct marketing. The recommendations target existing programs and offer new initiatives.

- **Appoint one state agency or department or a private or non-profit organization as the lead for state job matching, with the responsibility to lead a high-level interagency coordination team, work with other agencies to develop joint systems and serve as the principal resource to local programs.** As part of this action:
 - * Coordinate state agencies and designated agencies at the local level to develop a central repository for job listings similar to real estate multiple listings, setting up computerized job matching entities at low or no cost to the user, with user-friendly listing requirements for employers;
 - * Assess the extent to which state agency programs can be consolidated, grants and programs coordinated, and cooperation be maximized; and,
 - * Establish local sites where multiple job matching service providers can work together on a common computer system, using one set of forms to create an accessible database for all.
- **Reward with incentives County Welfare Departments that establish work-first programs and meet state established performance standards.** The standards should include quick participant entry into employment as the primary goal. Revise state law to permit County Welfare Departments to conduct follow up activities to participants beyond 30 days to improve job retention. Incentives should be provided for the length of time welfare recipients can hold a job in which they have been placed.
- **Survey the universe of job matching providers in California which provide services to the welfare population, including charitable and private temporary agencies.** Rank their cost and effectiveness in matching services. Compare California's array of job-matching services with best practices nationally. Use discretionary funding to replicate and expand best practices.
- **Transfer to state agency (and state funded) programs the best practices of private and public programs by devising and implementing strong monetary incentives, and following up with periodic progress evaluations. Establish a performance-based system to ensure organizations and programs engaged in job match are held accountable.**

- **Standardize, simplify and reduce paperwork and forms to an absolute minimum.** Provide assistance to employers and applicants in filling out forms. Establish outreach programs which explain and market job match programs. This is a particularly critical need for small and medium-size employers.
- **Market job matching programs.** Aggressively link state programs and employees to the private job creating sector. Work to reduce bias against hiring welfare recipients. The state should give recognition to employers who act responsibly. Actively market welfare job applicants to private sector employers.
- **Create strong incentives to share data (including jobs and applicants) among all job-matching programs, especially those in the non-profit and for-profit, private sector. Insist upon standardized data bases.**
- **Create and administer a targeted state job skills screening program.** The program would include individual assessment of welfare recipients' skill, knowledge and ability. Information from the assessment would be available to employers and others involved in job match activities.
- **Create incentives for employers to move to labor surplus areas or redirect programs--transportation or housing--to get workers to where the jobs are.**
- **Coordinate at the local level, job development activities among public and private agencies including those primarily responsible for moving welfare recipients into jobs.** The coordination activities must include methods to avoid duplication of job development activities and fragmentation of services.

WORKFORCE PREPARATION

The size and diversity of the state preclude any specific standard for workforce preparation, but rather dictate that the state provide general standards that allow localities and regions the flexibility and support needed to effectively meet local needs. The state can best affect proper workforce preparation by fostering a strong partnership with localities, and between the public and private sectors.

If welfare-to-work is to succeed, there will need to be a change in the culture of welfare. It will require new attitudes and new approaches by social service agencies and the recipients they serve. This is especially important as the focus in welfare moves from open-ended financial support to welfare as temporary assistance leading to employment. In addition, public agencies must adapt to the new environment by joining in collaborative efforts versus the current stand-alone programs they currently employ. These can be accomplished by increased engagement of businesses and economic development professionals, both at the state and local levels. The Governor is in the best position to provide the leadership role to make this happen.

The following recommendations will improve the state's workforce preparation efforts, providing welfare recipients with a greater chance to gain work, provide employers with the qualified workforce needed to compete in a global economy and make the best use of workforce preparation resources.

Collaboration Among Welfare-to-Work and Local Workforce Preparation Programs

- **Provide incentives for welfare-to-work and local workforce preparation systems to work together, rather than operate independent or duplicative programs:** Transitioning welfare recipients from temporary assistance to employment requires collaboration and coordination between county welfare agencies and local job training and placement programs. Employers should not have to be knowledgeable about the public assistance process, the training and placement pipeline, or what program a given individual has completed. They are primarily concerned with the individuals' job readiness, i.e. whether the individual has the natural core competencies to succeed at any job. These core competencies include commitment to coming to work on time, to adhering to employer rules, to meeting job performance standards and to solving personal conflicts that preclude good work performance. These core competencies are sometimes called "soft skills." Welfare recipients should be blended into the training and placement process and not be stigmatized by special programs.

Flexibility

- **The State must work with its delegation in Congress and other states to ensure that workforce preparation and education block grants provide the needed flexibility to meet the demands of welfare reform.**

- **The State should ensure that counties and local agencies also be given maximum flexibility in implementing welfare-to-work programs and initiatives, including innovative ways to contract with private businesses and non-profit organizations to provide workforce preparation services to welfare recipients.** Contractors, as with local public service providers, must be held accountable for performance standards and outcomes.
- **State government should work with county and local governments, including the California Association of Counties and the League of Cities and other interested parties to identify all specific regulations that inhibit the flexibility of local providers, to recommend ways to increase collaboration among workforce preparation providers, private companies and economic development professionals, and to establish high standards for performance and outcomes.**

“One-Stop Incentives”

- **Provide incentives to local “one-stop” systems to develop a single point of contact for workforce preparation and welfare-to-work services, including support services, such as child care and transportation, and make state and federal funding, where possible, contingent on establishing this level of collaboration.**

One-stop systems should be collaborative pools of resources which include all local service providers and may use electronic networks rather than physical co-location. Local one-stop systems must involve economic development professionals and employers in governance, goal setting, and accountability of service providers. Local one-stop systems must be aggressively marketed to both employers and job seekers.

Establish “Core Competencies”

- **Direct appropriate state agencies to work with employer organizations and local one-stop systems to develop mechanisms to set “core competencies” or common skills that could be used as a base by all education and training providers to ensure high quality programs.** Having a uniform understanding of what core competencies are will assist employers in assessing the job readiness of entry-level workers. Also, develop standards for employment assessments to identify individual job preparation needs for career path and advancement opportunities through employers, community colleges and private and public education and training programs. Individual written plans or contracts between employees and employers should be considered.

Business and Economic Development Input

- **Require local and statewide workforce preparation systems receiving state or federal funding to involve economic development professionals, employers and representatives from business organizations and industry in the development of curricula and training modules, as well as evaluating their effectiveness.** Workforce preparation systems must be responsive to the needs of employers and have methods to appraise and respond to changes in the local economy and labor demands.
- **Initiate a statewide marketing campaign to inform employers of local one-stop systems, workforce preparation services and opportunities for employer participation and partnerships.**
- **State government should work with business organizations and independent employers to identify all specific regulations that inhibit the flexibility of local providers, to recommend ways to increase collaboration among workforce preparation providers, private companies and economic development professionals, and to establish high standards for performance and outcomes.**

JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

California has gone from net job losses in the early 90's to impressive job gains since 1994. California's challenge in a global economy competing for a finite amount of private capital investment and business expansion is to assure that its public policies maximize job growth.

Since its creation in 1992, the California Trade and Commerce Agency has focused on the creation of high value jobs in growth industries for sustained economic expansion believing that the multiplier effect of these jobs creates the greatest number of entry level and support jobs throughout the economy and in those communities in which the companies locate.

The Agency also provides technical and financial assistance to the state's small companies which are the major engine of job growth in the state. These small companies include start ups in growth industries as well as companies providing support services in the community.

The challenge of welfare reform is not only to continue attracting those growth companies and their jobs, but also to address additional public policy initiatives that will assist in the creation of the maximum number of entry level jobs including part-time and temporary positions. This is especially the case in labor surplus areas.

Many employers will be engaged in a variety of innovative and flexible efforts that combine support and incentives for welfare recipients at the local level. Some employers are concerned about the potential financial risks involved in hiring individuals with little or no work experience and whether individuals have the basic skills, or "core competencies" necessary to be successful in the workplace. Many employers, particularly in larger companies are willing to provide entry-level workers the necessary training for skill-sets required of the specific job through both private and public education and training programs but they want government to focus on assuring that entry level workers have the competencies.

The following recommendations support 1) economic development and job growth; 2) reducing employer impediments to hiring; and, 3) employer incentives to retain employees. The Job Action Team had two goals in addressing these issues: reduce displacement of existing workers and avoiding the provision of unfair support services to one group of entry level workers over another. With this in mind, the Job Action Team feels the enactment of the following reforms will better enable California to successfully transition welfare recipients into the workforce.

Disadvantaged regions for job growth

- **Increase the number of Enterprise Zones, emphasizing labor surplus areas and innovative projects like technology or industrial parks for welfare-to-work as competitive criteria for eligible areas.** Currently, the Enterprise Zone Program is the only program that provides incentives to employers to locate in and hire from economically disadvantaged areas. Enterprise Zones provide tax credits to employers to offset training costs and provide capital to more quickly expand operations and facilities.

- Many local Enterprise Zone Programs currently have direct referral and operational relationships with local training and placement programs. Although there have been questions about the effectiveness of Enterprise Zones, the state auditor found in 1996 that in virtually every case, the zones were outperforming the counties in which they were located through lower job losses as measured by unemployment level. The Trade and Commerce Agency has improved the performance of zones by making designations first provisional, then permanent, rewarding innovative approaches such as consolidation of local permitting. New zones should be selected based on the number of welfare recipients in the zones and for areas which better integrate economic development, workforce preparation, and job matching programs.

Lowering employers' tax burdens

- **California needs to lower business taxes, including expanding the manufacturing investment tax credit (MIC) to include manufacturing support and regional distribution facilities, information processing facilities and telemarketing facilities.** These operations enhance California's competitiveness for manufacturing investment, but were not considered when the MIC was enacted in 1993 by the legislature. The MIC is a credit that may be used to reduce a taxpayer's income or franchise tax. The credit is 6% of the "qualified costs" paid or incurred on or after January 1, 1994, for acquiring, constructing or reconstructing qualified property. It is a non-refundable credit which would become effective January 1, 1998. Many of the jobs created at facilities that would be covered by the expanded credit are entry-level and lower skill-level positions. Increasing investment would benefit not only urban areas, but rural regions that have their sights set on recruiting these types of support facilities. However, caution must be taken to ensure not favoring one industry over another.

Limiting Employer Liability

- **In 1992, the RAND Corporations concluded that California's wrongful termination laws were reducing employment in the state by four to five percent, or approximately 650,000 jobs. Welfare reform and the need to encourage large numbers of employers to hire people with less work experience or skill sets intensifies the need to enact these reforms.** The state should limit wrongful discharge suits to those where the employer 1) has breached an "expressed" contract, instead of an "implied" contract; 2) violated its own written personnel policies or practices; or 3) terminated the employee in violation of public policy where there is no administrative or statutory scheme to provide a remedy. Under current law, an employee who claims wrongful termination can seek lifetime lost pay and receive compensation from a new job at the same time, thereby getting double recovery. Reforms should also prevent speculative future lost pay awards that result in double recoveries by providing that future lost pay may not exceed the amount of wages and benefits which the employee might reasonably have been expected to earn from the employer for a five year period following termination. Punitive awards should not exceed the amount awarded for compensatory damages.

- **Provide incentives for public and private entities that function as intermediaries to establish employer of record during a set probationary or training period.** The transitional period would protect the employer from employment related liabilities such as workers' compensation and unemployment insurance coverage while providing labor protection and training and placement for a "probationary" period for new employees. Using intermediaries such as temporary agencies, would also provide the opportunity for employees to utilize several part time jobs to make full-time work or the flexibility to accommodate school and work schedules. It would also give employees new to the workforce the ability to try several different types of jobs to help determine career interest and aptitudes. Ensure that any incentives for intermediaries do not disadvantage employees.
- **Require local welfare-to-work and planning and placement programs receiving state or federal funds to include economic development, private employers and workforce preparation representatives on their governance bodies. Require economic analyses and economic development strategies as part of their vision and organizational goal. Support the waiver of JTPA Section 141 (q) and regulation (627.225) to allow Job Training Partnership Act funds to be utilized for employment generating activities.**

Health Insurance Rates

- **Improve marketing and outreach of the Health Insurance Plan of California (HIPC) to employers and evaluate any constraints in the current program.** HIPC was established in legislation 1992 to enable California's small companies (2-50 employees) access to affordable health insurance. HIPC has been a great success, today insuring more than 126,000 members in 6,787 companies at rates competitive with those offered by the state employees' system. Still, there is a significant number of employers who do not carry insurance for employees, and this may disproportionately impact entry-level jobs.

Child Care

- Assuming California's competitiveness for investment, child care is one of the most critical issues facing both low-income workers and those coming off of welfare. It will also be important for second- and third-shift jobs necessitating evening and overnight child care. California must not create a new generation of latch-key children and affordable child care is key. This issue demands further in-depth study. However, there are current programs, such as the California Child Care Initiative Project, that have demonstrated success.

Provide additional funding and reduce match requirements for the California Child Care Initiative Project. This will result in an increase of infant/toddler slots for daycare and care during non-traditional hours and of family daycare providers through outreach and training. Expanding the California Child Care Initiative Project would complement other efforts, including private, on-site facilities, to provide affordable child care for welfare recipients and working parents in general. Review this program for its applicability to welfare reform.

Unemployment Insurance

- **Consider creating a vehicle to allow eligible workers in specified “at-risk” categories to collect unemployment insurance to which they would be entitled, but to relieve the account of the employer of any changes associated with that employee’s termination.** Because of the potential financial liabilities associated with costs of unemployment insurance, many small business owners hesitate to hire potential workers who, for whatever reason, may be considered “at-risk.” This would reduce the burden of employers to hire welfare recipients.

Local Financing

- **Capitalize the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank which was created with bi-partisan support in 1994, but never funded.** Twenty-five other states have adopted this concept to assist communities, particularly in rural areas, which lack financing to improve existing infrastructure or build new infrastructure. Many infrastructure projects are directly tied to business expansion and development plans that create new jobs in the region and also increase jobs in the supporting industries in companies large and small throughout the regional economies and result in greater entry-level employment opportunities.
- **Restore the Industrial Development Bond issuing authority from \$100 million back to the previous level of \$150 million.** This increase will make available more long-term, low-cost financing, particularly for small and medium-size manufacturers in an expansion mode. Historically, there has been in excess of \$100 million sought annually for this business attraction and expansion tool.

Regional Industry Clusters

- **Using the model established by the California Economic Strategy Panel, understand regional industry clusters and their public priorities to ensure maximum competitiveness for growth not only in high-value jobs and new industries, but also the increased opportunities for entry-level jobs in those industries and in the local economy.** In 1996, the California Economic Strategy Panel completed the first-ever, statewide strategic plan for economic development (see commerce.gov.ca/neweconomy). The effort produced a process that identifies emerging, transitional and declining industry clusters that can be replicated at any scale. The results are important to identify job growth or decline and workforce preparation demands by regional industry clusters.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS THAT REQUIRE FURTHER EXAMINATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The Job Action Team identified additional recommendations that require further examination and follow-up or long-term action. The following provides a list of recommendations for further consideration.

- Investment in and development of an electronic information infrastructure and on-line access by local organizations. This recommendation was raised in all three issue areas. The range of uses at the local level should include job listings, labor profiles, wage rates, and welfare recipient location patterns at a desegregated level that makes the information useful, yet, respects confidentiality requirements. Although some progress has been made in this area (i.e., data base of welfare recipients by residential patterns, job bank and postings, occupational profiles and industry profiles) the Job Action Team strongly recommends the building of a statewide electronic information infrastructure.
- Institute a state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for low income wage earners or lower personal income tax burden for low wage earners.
- Establish separate workers' compensation and unemployment insurance pools for a defined term consistent with welfare-to-work time limits.
- Create educational tax credits for employers who enroll employees in accredited certification or degree program.
- Require an individual bringing a wrongful termination claim to sign under perjury before taking action.
- Require local welfare and training and placement systems to work with public and private temporary job placement agencies for workforce preparation and placement of welfare recipients.
- Provide opportunities for employers to use training and educational funds to upgrade skills of entry-level workers from day-one of employment that result in career advancement and promotion and, consequently open that entry-level position for new workers.

CONCLUSION

For thirty-three days, the Job Action Team has attempted to solicit input from a wide range of employers throughout the state and has considered a variety of initiatives that would increase the number of job opportunities in the state and the likelihood that welfare recipients will find those jobs. Recognizing the short time frame and the fact that welfare reform is a process that will be implemented at all levels of government for many years, the Job Action Team strongly encourages employers to remain engaged in the development of these welfare reforms at all levels. The Governor and the Legislature should continue to consult with the Job Action Team as necessary or as questions arise over these recommendations.